

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 8-56 without prejudice:

1. (original) A prosthesis for implantation within a body passage, comprising:
a plurality of expandable segments defining a circumference and a longitudinal axis, each segment including an alternating pattern of curvilinear elements extending about the circumference, the alternating pattern including a first set of curvilinear elements having a first resistance to expansion and a second set of curvilinear elements having a second resistance to expansion substantially higher than the first resistance to expansion; and
a connector extending between adjacent segments.
2. (original) The prosthesis of claim 1, wherein each segment is expandable between a contracted condition, a first expanded condition, and a second expanded condition, the first expanded condition being achieved when a radial force exceeding the first resistance to expansion is applied to the segment, the second expanded condition being achieved when a radial force exceeding the second resistance to expansion is applied to the segment.
3. (original) The prosthesis of claim 1, wherein the first and second sets of curvilinear elements comprise substantially "U" shaped elements having first and second longitudinal lengths, respectively, and wherein the second longitudinal length is substantially less than the first longitudinal length.

4. (original) The prosthesis of claim 3, wherein the substantially “U” shaped elements of the first and second sets of curvilinear elements are connected to one another to define a substantially sinusoidal pattern extending circumferentially along the segments, the sinusoidal pattern having an alternating amplitude defined by the first and second longitudinal lengths.

5. (original) The prosthesis of claim 1, wherein the connector further comprises a pair of connectors located opposite one another on the circumference for facilitating articulation of the adjacent segments substantially transverse to the longitudinal axis.

6. (original) The prosthesis of claim 1, wherein the connector includes a curve extending at least partially circumferentially along the circumference defined by the plurality of segments.

7. (original) The prosthesis of claim 6, wherein the curve of the connector defines a sinusoidal shape adapted to extend and compress axially substantially evenly when the adjacent segments are subjected to a predetermined bending force.

8.-56. (canceled)